

Rep. Gutierrez: "I am very encouraged"

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Media Contact: Douglas Rivlin (202) 225-8203

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(Washington, DC) – *Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL), Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Taskforce on Immigration, was at American University to hear President Obama's speech today. The following is a statement by Rep. Gutierrez.*

I am very encouraged. The President made a strong case for immigration reform from a law and order, economic, and moral perspective. This was not the warm and fuzzy "Let's give immigrants a free ride" speech; this was a hard-nosed argument for why reform will benefit America. The President is bringing new allies to the table with evangelical, law enforcement, and state and local officials and they can help us reach out and bring Republicans to the table.

There is a lot of frustration with our government leaders for talking about immigration reform for a decade and not coming to agreement and passing a definitive plan. The President was very

clear about what to do: combine border and workplace enforcement with a functioning legal immigration system and get the millions of undocumented immigrants already here into the system and right with the law. That is the plan that more than 100 House Democrats support and that we can pass if we have some Republicans join us. It is the plan that *Senator* Obama supported along with Senator Kennedy, Senator McCain, and people in both parties have supported in the past.

Now we need to move it forward. We have been waiting for the President to lean forward and push with us on the immigration issue the same way he did as a presidential candidate. We hope this is the start of a sustained push.

We don't need more of the current chaos. We cannot achieve law and order or secure our borders unless we follow a comprehensive approach. We need solutions that work and the President has clearly proposed one.

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